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(POWERS)

WASHINGTON--U2 PILOT FRANCIS GARY POWERS MAY TELL HIS STORY TO THE WORLD AS EARLY AS SATURDAY, BUT MORE LIKELY SOMETIME NEXT WEEK, HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REPORTED TODAY.

HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE A NEWS CONFERENCE WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON WHETHER CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES INVOKE THEIR PRIORITY TO QUESTION HIM FIRST. IF HE IS SUMMONED TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE HOUSE OR SENATE, IT APPEARED LIKELY THAT HE WOULD DO SO ON FRIDAY.

IF NOT, OFFICIALS SAID, THEY WOULD SUGGEST TO HIM THAT HE MEET WITH NEWSMEN ON SATURDAY, BUT IT WAS BELIEVED THAT EARLY NEXT WEEK WAS A MORE LIKELY DATE FOR ANY NEWS CONFERENCE.

THE OFFICIALS DESCRIBED POWERS AS A "FREE AGENT" NOW THAT HIS INTERROGATION IS COMPLETED. THEY SAID "HE CAN WALK OUT OF WHERE HE IS TODAY, BUT HE HAS NOT CHOSEN TO DO SO."

THEY ALSO SAID IT WAS UP TO HIM WHETHER HE WOULD HOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE.

2/28--GE 204 P